

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
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R 071800Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0090  
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY NASSAU  
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN  
USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINGSTON 2403

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4  
TAGS: EFIN, PINT, JM  
SUBJECT: COMMENT ON THE FALL OF COORE AND THE RISE OF BELL

REFERENCE: KINGSTON 2293

1. INTRODUCTION: THE DEPARTURE OF DAVID COORE FROM THE  
FINANCE MINISTRY ON MARCH 1 CAME AS NO SURPRISE; RUMORS OF  
HIS IMPENDING DEPARTURE HAD BEEN CURRENT FOR MONTHS.  
THEY ALL HAD HIM RESIGNING TO TAKE UP A DIPLOMATIC POST, BUT  
AS PRIME MINISTER MICHAEL MANLEY'S ANNOUNCEMENT REVEALED,  
HE WAS SACKED. (LABOR MINISTER WILLIAM ISAACS SAID TO AN  
EMBASSY OFFICER SHORTLY AFTER THE NEWS OF COORE'S DEPARTURE  
WAS KNOWN BUT BEFORE THE FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE,  
"DAVID DIDN'T JUMP; HE WAS PUSHED.")

2. WHY THE CHANGE: A VARIETY OF REASONS ARE NOW BEING  
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ASSIGNED TO COORE'S UNCEREMONIOUS DEPARTURE. COLUMNIST  
JOHN HEARNE ARGUED IN HIS MARCH 3 COLUMN IN "THE GLEANER"  
THAT THE FORMER FINANCE MINISTER'S FIRING AND HIS  
REPLACEMENT BY FORMER EDUCATION MINISTER ERIC BELL  
PUTS "THE SEAL ... ON THE VICTORY WON BY THE MODERATES  
IN THE PNP LAST SEPTEMBER." HEARNE ADDED, "MR. COORE  
WAS TOO CLOSE AND TOO LOYAL TO THE PRIME MINISTER FOR THE

MODERATES IN THE PARTY -- OR THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF FOR THAT MATTER -- TO RISK LEAVING HIM IN CHARGE OF THE NATION'S MONEY." HEARNE'S COLLEAGUE WILMOT PERKINS IN AN ADJOINING COLUMN REACHED A DIFFERENT CONCLUSION, AND DESCRIBES COORE AS A "SACRIFICIAL LAMB". PERKINS TERMED COORE "TOO STAUNCH A FRIEND, TOO LOYAL AN ALLY" TO MICHAEL MANLEY, AND TOO WILLING TO FOLLOW THE PRIME MINISTER'S LEAD WHEN HE SHOULD HAVE COUNSELED RESTRAINT. MOREOVER, PERKINS SAID, COORE DISPLAYED TOO GREAT A WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT BLAME FOR THE ONGOING ECONOMIC CRISIS, AND "THUS EXHIBITED THE ESSENTIAL TRAITS OF A SACRIFICIAL LAMB, TO WHICH DUBIOUS HONOR HE HAS NOW BEEN CALLED".

3. COMMENT: WE QUESTION HEARNE'S THESIS, IF ONLY BECAUSE A WELL-KNOWN MODERATE SUCH AS ISAACS COULD VOICE SUCH DEEP CONCERN OVER COORE'S DEPARTURE. ISAACS LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT WHILE THE MODERATE GROUP BELIEVES THE FORMER FINANCE MINISTER WAS TOO CLOSE A FRIEND OF MANLEY AND TOO EASILY ALLOWED HIS BETTER JUDGEMENT TO BE SWAYED, STILL HIS SACKING HAS REMOVED ONE OF THE MORE RESPONSIBLE VOICES IN THE CABINET. PERKINS' IDEA OF COORE AS A SACRIFICIAL LAMB IS MORE PERSUASIVE. THE SIMPLEST REASON MAY BE THAT MANLEY'S CALLS ON COORE'S LOYALTY REACHED THEIR LIMITS AND COORE HAD BEGUN TO TELL THE PRIME MINISTER HARD AND UNPALATABLE TRUTHS. COORE REPORTEDLY CONFIDENTIAL

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ALSO BEGAN TO VOICE HIS CRITICISMS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN PRIVATE. IT MAY HAVE BEEN NECESSARY TO SACK HIM BEFORE HE SAID SOMETHING PUBLICLY -- AS A MINISTER -- WHICH WOULD EMBARRASS THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS GOVERNMENT.

4. WHY NOW? IT IS DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN COORE'S REMOVAL AT THIS TIME. BOTH COORE AND BELL, AND PARTICULARLY COORE, WHO IS BETTER KNOWN IN INTERNATIONAL CIRCLES, ARE WELL REGARDED ABROAD. BOTH ARE MODERATES -- RESPONSIBLE AND PRAGMATIC. RICHARD FLETCHER, THE PRIME MINISTER'S MAJOR POLICY ADVISOR AND THE GOVERNMENT'S CHIEF NEGOTIATOR WITH THE IMF IS STILL VERY MUCH AROUND. NO REAL CHANGE IN POLICY TOWARDS THE IMF, OR, IN GENERAL, WITH RESPECT TO THE WHOLE GAMUT OF PRICE, WAGE, FISCAL AND MONETARY MATTERS, IS EXPECTED. THE DISMISSAL, THEREFORE, DOES NOT APPEAR INTENDED TO SIGNAL OR ARRANGE A CHANGE IN POLICY. IT MAY SIMPLY BE THAT TWO OTHER CONSIDERATIONS BROUGHT MATTERS TO A HEAD: (1) THE REPORTEDLY SOURED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MANLEY AND COORE; AND (2) MANLEY'S WISH TO SELECT AN ENERGETIC, LOYAL MINISTER, WHO IS IN EXCELLENT AROMA DOMESTICALLY, AND WHO MANLEY SEEMS

TO REGARD AS A SUCCESSFUL TROUBLE-SHOOTER -- BADLY NEEDED NOW.

5. OPPOSITION VIEW. OPPOSITION LEADER EDWARD SEAGA IN COMMENTING ON COORE'S FALL TAKES A DIFFERENT POSITION, URGING -- AS ALWAYS -- THE NEED FOR A COMPLETE OVERHAUL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES AND PRACTICES. THE JAMAICA LABOR PARTY (JLP) LEADER CITES COORE'S REPORTEDLY GROWING PROPENSITY "TO BUCK THE SYSTEM OF POLITICAL COMMANDS WHICH HAVE OVER THE YEARS REDUCED THE ... MINISTRY OF FINANCE TO A HUMBLE CASHIER'S CAGE MANNED BY BOYS WHO DO PRECISELY AS THEY ARE DIRECTED." HE THUS DOES NOT SEE IN COORE'S DISMISSAL AN INDICATION THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO CHANGE ITS WAYS. RATHER, HE  
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CONCLUDES THAT "... THE GOVERNMENT WISHES TO CARRY ON AS USUAL."

6. PARTY CONSIDERATIONS. COORE'S DISMISSAL CAME ON THE EVE OF THE RESUMED ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE PNP, AND THIS MAY HAVE BEEN LESS THAN COINCIDENTAL. AT THE CONFERENCE, THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS WHICH WERE POSTPONED AT LAST SEPTEMBER'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE WERE DEFERRED UNTIL THE NEXT ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN SEPTEMBER (SEE KINGSTON 2382). THIS MOVE, WHICH HAD THE PRIME MINISTER'S SUPPORT, MAY HAVE BEEN SEEN AS A FURTHER, IF FAR FROM UNEXPECTED, BLOW TO THE PARTY'S RADICAL FACTION SINCE IT HAS NOW LEFT MODERATES HOLDING THREE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENCIES UNTIL SEPTEMBER. MOREOVER, THE RADICALS RECEIVED A FURTHER BLOW WHEN THE CONFERENCE RATIFIED THE SUSPENSION OF THE PNP YOUTH ORGANIZATION'S CHAIRMAN, PAUL BURKE, FOR HIS STATEMENT ON CRIME AND SECURITY MADE LAST FALL (SEE 77 KINGSTON 6915). SINCE COORE WAS IDENTIFIED WITH THE MODERATE FACTION, HAD COME INCREASINGLY TO OPPOSE "POLITICAL INTERFERENCE IN ECONOMIC AFFAIRS", AND HAD NO DIFFICULTY IN DEFENDING JAMAICA'S RELIANCE ON THE IMF, HIS DEPARTURE WOULD HAVE MADE IT EASIER FOR THE RADICALS TO BEAR THESE FURTHER BLOWS. IN ADDITION, SINCE THE CONFERENCE REPORTEDLY CONSIDERED A NUMBER OF REPORTS CONCERNING THE STATE OF THE NATION, ALL OF WHICH HAVE TOUCHED ON THE SAD STATE OF THE ISLAND'S ECONOMY, COORE MAY HAVE BEEN A CONVENIENT TARGET FOR BLAME.

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R 071800Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON  
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INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
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7. BELL'S PROSPECTS. WHILE THE DEPARTURE OF COORE MAY NOT HAVE COME AS A SURPRISE (THOUGH ITS MANNER WAS UNEXPECTED), THE CHOICE OF BELL TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE FINANCE MINISTRY WAS. THE PERSON MOST FREQUENTLY TIPPED TO SUCCEED COORE WAS MINISTER OF STATE FOR PLANNING RICHARD FLETCHER, IN TERMS OF TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS, THE PERSON BEST SUITED TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY. STILL FLETCHER HAD DEFINITE HANDICAPS. FIRST, HE IS A SENATOR AND DOES NOT HOLD ELECTIVE OFFICE (ALL SENATORS ARE APPOINTED). SECOND, HE AND THE PRIME MINISTER ARE MARRIED TO SISTERS, AND HIS APPOINTMENT AS FINANCE MINISTER WOULD HAVE CREATED COMPLICATIONS FOR THE PRIME MINISTER WHICH HE DOES NOT NEED. WHAT MANLEY PROBABLY WANTS IN THE FINANCE MINISTRY -- IN CONTRAST TO WHAT THE COUNTRY NEEDS -- IS SOMEONE WHO CAN BE COUNTED ON TO DEAL CAPABLY WITH THE MINISTRY'S WORK WITHOUT QUESTIONING TOO FREQUENTLY THE PRIME MINISTER'S POLITICAL DECISIONS. BELL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRIME MINISTER WILL NOT BE COMPLICATED AS WAS THAT OF COORE BY FORTYTWO YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP, A FACT WHICH MAY HAVE OCCASION-  
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ALLY LED THE PRIME MINISTER TO INTERPRET COORE'S OBJECTIVE COMMENTS AS THE BETRAYAL OF FRIENDSHIP AND LOYALTY. AMBASSADOR IRVING HAS OVSERVED THAT BELL IS MODERATE IN HIS VIEWS -- AND, IN PRIVATE, CAN BE A PERCEPTIVE AND OBJECTIVE CRITIC OF MANY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES. SO BELL SOON MAY FIND HIMSELF IN THE SAME POSITION VIS-A-VIS

THE PRIME MINISTER AS COORE DID. DESPITE HIS LACK OF TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE IN THE FINANCIAL FIELD, BELL'S RECORD IN THE TWO MINISTERIAL POSITIONS HE HAD HELD SUGGESTS THAT HE WILL DO A COMMENDABLE JOB AT THE FINANCE MINISTRY. HE IS DESCRIBED AS ENERGETIC, ARTICULATE, HARDWORKING, SERIOUS AND RESPONSIBLE, AND PROVIDED CONCEPTUAL LEADERSHIP IN DESIGNING THE MINISTRY'S FIVE-YEAR PLAN.

8. BELL TAKES OFFICE AS A MINISTER WHO IS LOYAL TO HIS PARTY AND TO HIS PRIME MINISTER, EVEN THOUGH HIS PERSONAL VIEWS MAY DIFFER. MANLEY MAY BE RELYING ON THIS LOYALTY TO INSURE THAT HIS POLITICAL GOALS ARE NOT SIDETRACKED AS THE RESULT OF ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS. WE WOULD ANTICIPATE THAT BELL'S LOYALTY WILL NOT STAND IN THE WAY OF HIS WILLINGNESS TO TAKE THE ADVICE OF HIS VERY COMPETENT SENIOR SUBORDINATES SUCH AS FINANCE SECRETARY HORACE BARBER AND DEPUTY BANK OF JAMAICA GOVERNOR GLADSTONE BONNICK, OR TO GAIN INSIGHTS FROM HIS JUNIOR COLLEAGUE, SENATOR FLETCHER. THE QUESTION WHICH ONLY TIME CAN ANSWER IS HOW WILLING HE WILL BE TO OFFER THE PRIME MINISTER UNPALATABLE TRUTHS. IN OUR VIEW, THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITY PRESENTLY REQUIRED OF A JAMAICAN FINANCE MINISTER IS THE COURAGE TO BE CANDID WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. ALTHOUGH BELL MAY INITIALLY BE MORE DIFFIDENT THAN COORE, PARTICULARLY IN THE LATTER STAGES OF HIS SIX YEARS AS FINANCE MINISTER, ON THE OTHER

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HAND, BELL'S RELATIONSHIP -- AS ALREADY NOTED -- IS NOT COMPLICATED BY LONG YEARS OF PERSONAL TIES. WE THINK IT DISTINCTLY POSSIBLE THAT HE CAN BE MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN WAS COORE. BUT HE WILL HAVE TO INSTRUCT HIMSELF WELL AND HE WILL HAVE TO SCREW UP HIS COURAGE IF HE IS TO TACKLE THE DOMINATING, ALMOST DOMINEERING MICHAEL MANLEY. HAVERKAMP

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## Message Attributes

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